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St. John the Aged

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St. John the Aged

After

One Hundred Years.

Illustrated.

Darby. Pa.
Olive V. Walton
526 Main Street.

1904

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To

Reverend George Van Deurs,

Whose Saintly Character
has been a Blessing
and an Inspira-
tion to Many.

"You do poets and their song

A grievous wrong

If your own soul does not bring

To their high imagining

As much beauty as they sing."

—Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

Illustrations

Christ on the Cross and the Three Marys' - - - *Munkacsy*

Christ and the Fishermen - - *Zimmermann*

Christ in the home of Martha and Mary - - - *Hofmann*

Vision of St. John the Evangelist on the Isle of Patmos - *Dolci*

ST. JOHN THE ÁGED

After One Hundred Years

I'M growing very old. This weary
head
That hath so often leaned on Jesus'
breast,
In days long past that seem almost a
dream
Is bent and hoary with its weight of
years.

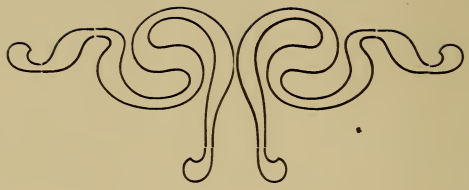
These limbs that followed Him—
my Master—oft
From Galilee to Judah ; yea, that stood
Beneath the cross, and trembled
with His groans,
Refuse to bear me even
through the streets

The three Marys' at the Cross.

To preach unto my children.
E'en my lips
Refuse to form the words
my heart sends forth.
My ears are dull, they scarcely
hear the sobs
Of my dear children gathered round
my couch:

God lays his hand upon me,—
yea his HAND,
And not his ROD—the gentle hand
that I
Felt, those three years, so often
pressed in mine,
In friendship such as passeth
woman's love.

I'm old, so old I cannot recollect
The faces of my friends, and
I forget
The words and deeds that make up
daily life;
But that dear face and every word
HE spoke,



Grow more distinct as others
fade away,
So that I live with Him and holy
dead
More than with living.

Some seventy years ago
I was a fisher by the sacred
sea.
It was at sunset. How the tranquil
tide
Bathed dreamily the pebbles! How
the light

Crept up the distant hills and in its
wake
Soft purple shadows wrapped the
dewy fields!
And then HE came and called me.
Then I gazed,
For the first time on that sweet face.
Those eyes

Christ and the Fishermen.

From out of which, as from a
window, shone
Divinity, looked on my inmost
soul,
And lighted it forever. Then
His words
Broke on the silence of my heart
and made

The whole world musical.
Incarnate love
Took hold of me and claimed me
for its own.
I followed in the twilight, holding fast
His mantle.

O, what holy walks we had,
Through harvest fields and desolate,
dreary wastes!
And oftentimes he leaned upon my
arm,
Wearied and wayworn, I was young
and strong

And so upbore Him. Lord, now I am
weak,
And old and feeble! Let me rest on
Thee!
So, put Thine arm around me.
Closer still!

Christ in the Home of Mary and Martha.

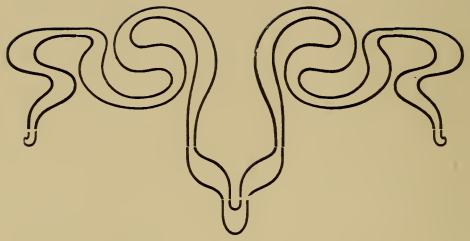
How strong Thou art! The twilight
draws apace.
Come, let us leave these noisy streets
and take
The path to Bethany; for Mary's
smile
Awaits us at the gate, and Martha's
hands

Have long prepared the cheerful
evening meal,
Come, James, the Master waits;
and Peter, see,
Has gone some steps before.

What say you, friends?
That this is Epheseus, and Christ
has gone
Back to HIS kingdom?
Ay, 'tis, 'its so.
I know it all; and yet, just now,
I seemed

To stand once more upon my native
hills,
And touch my Master. O, how oft
I've seen
The touch of HIS garments bring back
strength
To palsied limbs! I feel it has to
mine.

Up! bear me once more to my church!
Once more
There let me tell of a Savior's
love;
For, by the sweetness of my Master's
voice
Just now, I think he must be
very near,—



Coming, I trust, to break the vail,
which time
Has worn so thin that I can see
beyond
And watch His footsteps.

So, raise up my head.
How dark it is! I cannot seem
to see
The faces of my flock. Is that
the sea
That murmurs so, or is it
weeping? Hush,

My little children! God so loved
the world
He gave His Son. So love ye one
another.
Love God and man. Amen.
Now bear me back,
My legacy unto an angry world
is this:

I feel my work is finished. Are the streets
so full?
What, call the folk my name?
The Holy John?
Nay, write me rather, Jesus Christ's
beloved,
And lover of my children.

Lay me down
Once more upon my couch, and open
wide
The eastern window. See, there comes
a light
Like that which broke upon my soul
at eve,

Vision of St. John the Evangelist on the Isle of Patmos.

When, in the dreary Isle of Patmos,
Gabriel came
And touched me on the shoulder.
See, it grows
As when we mounted toward the
pearly gates.
I know the way! I trod it once
before.

And hark! it is the song the ransomed
sang
Of glory to the Lamb! How loud
it sounds!
And that unwritten one! Methinks
my soul
Can join it now. But who are these
who crowd

The shining way? Say!—joy! 'tis
the eleven,
With Peter first? How eagerly
he looks!
How bright the smiles are beaming
on James' face!

I am the last. Once more we are
complete
To gather round the Paschal feast.
My place
Is next my Master. O, my Lord,
my Lord!

How bright Thou art! and yet the very same
I loved in Galilee. 'Tis worth the hundred years
To feel this bliss! So lift me up, dear Lord,
Unto Thy bosom. There shall I abide.

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